

THE MEGAPHONE

An Organ of the Rascals, Rogues, and RapsCALLIONS

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Number 2

First Annual Rascals Ball

Forty-two people attended the historic First Annual Rascals Ball which took place with unprecedented success on February 4, 1995 at Chatham Hall in Chatham Village. The hall was packed, in spite of the first snow storm of the season which had dumped in excess of 6 inches of road-clogging mess on the Pittsburgh area. Jon Landgraf¹, who came from Yorktown, Virginia, to attend the ball, encountered the snow while twisting through the mountains of West Virginia, finding his anticipated time of arrival delayed by a number of hours. Our regrets to those who were unable to venture out on such a miserable night, including Caesar Grossi and Don Kellander. But in spite of the miserable weather outside, inside Chatham Hall, a hilarious and gay time was had by all.

The hall and caterer were arranged by Lee Wolfson, with no small input from his able wife, Jane. Pre-ball preparations were underway furiously on the day of the ball, with much help provided by the Wolfson family and Jon Landgraf¹ who ran hither and thither getting last-minute items. After the tables and chairs had been set, plates, glasses and silverware washed, carpets rolled up, sound system set up, and the beer and wine put into the fridge, with no time to spare, the flood of Rascals and their wives began to arrive at 7:00 PM. Included among the hor d'oeuvres were Bill Baierl's famed creation, Wrapped Scallions, a stinking concoction of cream cheese and salami wrapped around a scallion. During the cocktail hour, Rascals were able to not only visit with one another and meet the mysterious women behind the men, but also to look over photos and artifacts of past Rascal events.

A buffet dinner was enjoyed and the Rascals cozily packed into a

room which was just big enough. Following dinner, the assembled crowd was entertained with a slide show review of the previous five Rascal's Challenges, including programs by Glenn Vernon, Dennis Looney, Reg Litz, Greg Scheer, and Dan Morrison. The slides were heavily interlarded with singing by the Rascal Quintet [Bob Edmunds, Peter Kaplan, Harry Plantinga and Jack Brice under the direction of Maestro Greg Scheer]. Though not one to smoke the evil weed, Charlei George pleased and surprised the congregation with his graceful and convincing reading of Sam Hazo's "When the Evening Gets Down to Cigars." The slide



show was amusingly narrated by Bill Baierl, who sought to offend all with his gutter humor. Indeed, he managed to malign the hero of our first Rascal's Challenge, by adjoining a slide of his water closet with a scatological reference to an M.F.-ing Gale. Simply appalling, Bill.

After the slide show, the RR&R's new flag was presented to the amazement and thrill of all. In conformity with Article 1, paragraph 4 of the RR&R bylaws, a toast was made in honor of Jane "Betsy Ross" Wolfson, the flag's creator.

A final element in the evening's presentation was the naming of the first Rascal o' the Year. Voting for this honor was confined to members and Maestro Greg Scheer

pulled nearly 60 percent of the votes. The coveted Rascal o' the Year award carries with it a traveling trophy, to be held by the winner for one year. The trophy is a 3 foot high ceramic tower, decorated with a variety of plastic do-dads and Icelandic coins, surmounted with a crowed ceramic penguin, back-dropped by a halo radiating swizzle sticks. It stands on a base of two cigar boxes, upon which are mounted plastic figurines of Martians and spacemen. At the top of the column and base of the penguin is a brass box, with an engraved plate reading "Rascal o' the Year." In the box is a photograph of the Rascal o' the Year. The whole structure is held together with copious globs of Goop[®].

We have reports that on the trophy's final trip home, Greg Scheer's car died in East Liberty. Not willing to abandon his greatest honor to date, Maestro Scheer carried the trophy on his lap in the front seat of the tow truck, whose curious driver asked many questions about it and the RR&R, concluding, finally, by saying, "Yeah, I thought it looked like art."

Late in the evening, before the dancing started, Maestro Scheer presented his newest and, perhaps finest, creation: a new theme song for the RR&R entitled "Interesting Thing." According to the original plans for the evening, this song was to be sung with the presentation of the flag, but, well, someone screwed up. As it happened, the Rascal Quintet was recalled and the song was sung to universal approbation and acclamation.

After all this eating, drinking and nonsense, which lasted for hours, Amarillis, a Pittsburgh-based Renaissance dance band, led by Maro Avakian, played and led the Rascals and their guests in a variety of dances from the 14th through 19th centuries. The fact that all of these dances involved frequent changing of partners, resulting in all manner of other- and

same-sex couplings, led **Jeff Campbell** to suggest that there may be a causal relationship between Virginia's reel and its high rate of wife-swapping. **Bill Baierl** confirmed this theory by reporting that reeling and wife-swapping are endemic within the beltway. Staff epidemiologists are studying the matter and **Bill** is assembling a campaign committee.

People began to limp home sometime after midnight, and the crew who set up then began to tear down. As far as we know, everyone got home in one piece.

One element missing from the evening was the customary after-dinner cigar. The no smoking policy of Chatham Hall prevented smoking inside, and the severe weather prevented smoking outside. This combination of misfortunes was taken particularly hard by **Dan Morrison**, who had made a special trip to the tobacconist to buy the biggest, longest, and fattest cigar available: ring size 54, length 8 ½ inches, the *Cohiba Donkey Dong*.

Meriwether Lewis

On December 7, 1994, **Glenn Vernon** presented a program to the RR&R on the life and death of Captain Meriwether Lewis, of Lewis and Clark fame. He informed his audience of many of the intrigues in the administration of Thomas Jefferson, whose friend and one-time private secretary Lewis was. The audience also learned details of Lewis' overland expedition to the Pacific, the first of within the territory which was later to become the United States. Upon his return to civilization, Lewis was appointed as Governor of Upper Louisiana, which had been recently acquired from France. Lastly we learned of Lewis' ill-fated trip back to Washington from St. Louis. Whether Lewis was murdered or committed suicide at Grinder's Stand on the Natchez Trace was the main topic and the matter was settled, once and for all, with a polling of the assembled Rascals. Though not unanimous, the majority took Neely to have been Lewis' murderer.

We should note that **Dennis Looney**, on his Christmas holidays in Tennessee, was fortunate to visit the site of Lewis' death and grave and returned with photos which became a part of the slide show at the Ball.

New Members

The Rascals welcomed two new members at their most recent business meeting. They were **Bill Baierl** and **Charlei George**.

Bill lives in Ingomar, not far from the home in which he was raised. He and his wife, **Lisa**, live in a stone house built some time in the early part of 19th century. Being part of a car family, **Bill** does sell Chevy trucks, but his main occupation is fund-raising for non-profit organizations. He is politically active, being involved in a local environmental interest group as well as being a past chairman of the Allegheny County Patriot Party. Educated at the University of Pennsylvania, **Bill** is continuing his studies at the University of Pittsburgh. He has two dogs.

Charlei -- yes, that is how his name is spelled -- lives in South Oakland, with his wife, **Susan**, his two children, **Jacob** [also known as **Boy George**] and **Lydia**, and his dog, **Kellaby**, which is a transliteration of the Arabic for "my dog." **Charlei's** interest in Arabic, no doubt, stems from the fact that his grandfather emigrated to Green County, Pennsylvania from Syria. **Charlei** is fluent in Arabic and Italian, though you may speak with him in English if you prefer. He is employed by the University of Pittsburgh, as is half of Allegheny County, as a statistician and is active in many roles at Bellefield Presbyterian Church.

We've Heard That . . .

Lee Wolfson went to Hawaii and found it more pleasant and beautiful than Pittsburgh . . . **Dennis Looney** has a new book coming out at the end of 1995 under the title "Compromising the Classics: Sources of Narrative Design in

Romance and Epic in the Italian Renaissance." This book, which is bound to be a best-seller, is a study of the work of Boiardo, Ariosto, Tasso, who wrote romance epics in Ferrara, Italy . . . **Glenn Vernon** recently inspected two houses: one that **Dennis Looney** was selling, and the other that he was buying . . . **Lee Wolfson** and **Dennis Looney** play basketball together on their lunch hours. Being the old men of the league, they guard each other. **Dennis Looney**, however, has injured his shoulder and will have to sit out for a while . . . **Bill Baierl**, **Greg Scheer**, and **Dan Morrison** traveled to Erie to see **Huun Huur Tu**, a throat-singing band from Tannu Tuva, who played songs from their latest album, "Sixty Horses in My Herd" . . . **Jack Brice** recently got lucky . . . **Sam Wood** was in Amsterdam on the night of the Rascals Ball, but being a devout Catholic, he did not patronize any sin parlors . . . **Karl Williams** recently showed tremendous restraint in not using his bazooka on one of his students, a fact which may lead the Board of Education to award **Karl** a gold medal . . . **Jeff Campbell** cut someone's head open . . . **Jeff Sivek** doesn't get to cut anyone's head open, but he still loves his job -- he, too, is employed by the Pitt megapolis . . . **Reg Litz** was awarded the Order of Canada and celebrated by doing some ice fishing on Lake Winnipeg and drinking some brewskis . . . **Greg Bruns** won the PNC Homeless Award for being the loan officer who denied the most mortgages in a 12 month period . . . **Brian Holly** was mightily sick recently. Police were called after he circumambulated his apartment house seven times screaming "I'm going to puke!" with his nightgown pulled up over his head . . . **David Dunn**, with the help of his wife, has produced a third son, **Sullivan Lynch Dunn**. While driving to work in West Virginia, an 18-wheeler drove up his butt and smashed his car something fierce. He decided not to go to work that day. Recently his chickens were alarmed by a bear in the woods. He had to let them out of their pen because

they were having a shit-fit and he figured he'd just as well spread the poop around . . . Bob Edmunds has been doing some work on his house. Seems that the winter ice had gotten behind some of the bricks on the front of his place and sent them to the ground. Bob's mama told him to take that correspondence course in masonry, but he didn't listen . . . Charlei George recently enjoyed several days of bachelor life [maybe unmarried-father life is more accurate] as his wife went off to a very probing conference in New Orleans, leaving him at home with Jacob and Lydia . . . Jon Landgraf has not yet had the chance to name a new species of mushroom -- his life-long goal -- but he did see a new Kung Fu movie . . . Greg Scheer is finally learning how to write music, taking lessons in modal counterpoint. His latest work, a series of variations on "Mary had a Little Lamb" was recently banned by Vatican Radio for its insinuation that the Queen of Heaven had had unnatural relations with under-age sheep. But in the local market, Maestro Scheer's big hit "Interesting Thing" is now the number one requested song at WYEP on nights that Dan Morrison is up working on his beloved and beloathed dissertation . . . Harry Plantinga's home page [<http://www.cs.pitt.edu/~planting>], which is connected to Greg Scheer's home page, was recently linked to Dan Morrison's home page [<http://www.pitt.edu/~figtree>]. Voila! Rascal Net!

Rascal Philosophy

The befuddled and benighted editor of The Megaphone swears, with many solemn oaths, that more than 50 percent of its content is true. Thus, according to certain epistemological models, beliefs supported by the content of this rag are justified. This claim is, of course, denied by stupid Kantians who continue to foolishly and unfashionably insist that one is morally obliged to pursue apodictic certainty and to not settle for mere epistemic probability -- especially in matters of eternal importance,

such as lampoonery and a tom-foolery.

RSVP et ASAP

Apparently there has been some confusion regarding two acronyms employed in RR&R invitations: RSVP and ASAP. Contrary to prevailing opinion, one cannot conjugate the acronym, RSVP. Thus one cannot rightly say "I am calling to RSVP," or "I'm RSVPing," or "I would have RSVPed sooner if I weren't such an ass." The acronym is composed of the initials of the French phrase "répondez s'il vous plait" which would translate literally as, "Respond, if you please," rendered less-than-literally as "Please respond." For those who are unaware of the artful ambiguity of language, it should be noted that the "please" in "please respond" does not imply the asking of a favor or an optional behavior. To not respond when so asked places one firmly in the camp of the Philistines, and it has been the observation of your devoted Secretary, that Rascal mail somehow never reaches Philistine addresses.

ASAP is an English acronym composed of the initials of the phrase, "as soon as possible." Brownie points are awarded in heaven to those who RSVP ASAP and demerits are assigned to those who translate this acronym as "at least 2 hours before the event."

Please know that your prompt response to RR&R invitations eases the burden on your overworked and unpaid Secretary and facilitates the planning for meetings. Just as the invitation comes to you as a special communication, so should your response be a special communication. A note, e-mail, or call for the purpose of responding is appreciated and befitting a gentleman. A passing mention or obscure gesture is impolite and lends itself to misunderstanding, confusion and consternation.



Greg Scheer: Rascal o' the Year

At the tender age of 28, Maestro Greg Scheer of Wilkinsburg has won the prestigious Rascal o' the Year award. In an post-Ball interview, Maestro Scheer said, with floods of tears dripping off his chin, "I can't believe it, I just can't believe it! Who would have ever thought that I could be so honored? After years of degradation and wallowing in all manner of sin, it is clear that God has once again smiled upon me."

Maestro Sheer has attended each meeting since Tuva Day and has organized the music for each meeting since Moses F. Gale Day.

This entails arranging songs related to each meeting's theme



and coaxing music out of the Rascal Quartet/Quintet/Sextet. Maestro Scheer produced a video documentary on Burgettstown, which was presented to the RR&R at the Pauline Pig Fest. This video was produced on location and in the studios of PCTV and will be broadcast on that station in the not-too-distant future. His role in the First Annual Rascals Ball was to hire the musicians, drive a hard bargain on their pay, and to find a sound system. He also selected the beer for the night.

Maestro Scheer's most recent contribution to the RR&R, his new Rascal's theme "Interesting Thing," premiered at the Ball. Critics raved about the pompous ditty, which captures the spirit of the RR&R with its both its words and its music.

Achille I, King of Araucania & Pagatonia

11/7/1841 to 3/16/1902

Achille I, by the grace of God and the will of the Mapuche and Araucanian Indians, King of Araucania & Patagonia. Born on November 7, 1841 in Reims, France. Died on March 16, 1902 in Paris, France.



Achille I was the second king in a dynasty established in 1860 by Orelíé-Antoine I. Orelíé-Antoine I lived among the Mapuche and Araucanian Indians and was elected their head toqui, a remarkable accomplishment given the extreme hostility these tribes showed toward all Europeans. He very quickly formed the first confederation of Indians in southern South America and established the Kingdom of Araucania & Patagonia. The Republic of Chile, having designs on the territory of this kingdom, send in troops and kidnaped Orelíé-Antoine I, unlawfully imprisoned him, under barbaric conditions, for nearly a year and after a kangaroo trial, deported him to France. Orelíé-Antoine I made three more expeditions to his occupied kingdom and spent his entire life in defense of the right of his subjects to choose their own government. He died in exile, in Paris. Achille I, his successor, continued the fight, with near-success, but also died exiled from his own subjects. Chile's illegal occupation of the territory of Araucania has led to the destruction of the Mapuche and Aruacanian Indians — two tribes who resisted the incursions of the Spanish Empire and the Republic of Chile for centuries. The royal house of Araucania survives and continues to assert its rights under international law and strives to defend the

rights of the natives of Araucania. The present head of the royal house, Prince Philippe d'Araucanie, lives in exile in Paris.

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